DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 090 477 CG 008 892

TITLE A Comparison of Activities and Behaviors in Coeducational and Non-Coeducational Residence Halls.
INSTITUTION Maryland Univ., College Park.
PUB DATE Feb 71
NOTE 12p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Adjustment (to Environment); *Cocurricular Activities; *Coeducation; *College Housing; *College Students; *Dormitories; Hypothesis Testing; Objectives; Questionnaires; Sex Differences; Student Behavior

ABSTRACT

This report reviews the objectives for coed housing, relates previous findings, and examines several hypotheses: (1) that coed units will have more activities and programs; (2) that the activities will be more widely varied; (3) that coed residents report more contact with faculty, more interaction with the opposite sex, more academically oriented behaviors, more time in the hall, more on-campus dates, and different discussion topics; and (4) that coed residents will express more general satisfaction with their living environment. A locally devised questionnaire was distributed randomly to 272 coed and non-coed residence hall students. Results indicated that: (1) coed halls do have more activities and programs, but they are not necessarily more varied; (2) coed residents have more contact with faculty, interact more with the opposite sex, have more on-campus dates, watch somewhat less television, spend fewer weekends at home, and seek help from somewhat different sources; and (3) residents of coed halls seem to be more generally satisfied with their residence experiences. Differences were not reported between coed and non-coed hall residents on several academically-oriented behaviors, such as time spent studying and number of non-assigned books read. (Author)

ED 090477

A COMPARISON OF ACTIVITIES AND BEHAVIORS IN COEDUCATIONAL AND NON-COEDUCATIONAL RESIDENCE HALLS

Office of the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
University Housing Office
University of Maryland
College Park
February, 1971

CG 008 892

INTRODUCTION:

Review of Related Literature

Coeducational housing of students is relatively new to the University of Maryland, being instituted in Hagerstown Hall and the Mobile Area in the Fall of 1969. Cecil Hall became the third coeducational unit in the Fall of 1970.

A considerable number of research studies cited in contemporary reviews have investigated the impact of residential arrangements on students (e.g., Feldman and Newcomb, 1969). Findings from most of these studies indicate that where a student lives makes a difference in his attitudes, his perceptions of the university, and his social and academic behavior. These studies have largely centered on comparing students living in "on-campus," "off-campus," and "Greek" housing, or comparing the effects of "homogeneous" and "heterogeneous" groupings on a variety of dimensions.

Empirical research in the area of coeducational housing is very limited. Eskow (1970), in his thesis examining Hagerstown Hall, cites but three relevant documents, two of which assess a combined coeducational and living-learning unit. The third, a study at Stanford, revealed: (1) students participated more in informal group activity and less in structural one-to-one dating, (2) they formed relationships other than those based exclusively on sex, (3) they studied more with members of the opposite sex, (4) they planned and participated in more cultural and community activities, (5) the manners and appearances of the students improved, the noise level decreased, and there was less physical damage done to the building, (6) the level of conversation among the residents was intellectually higher, and (7) there was little sexual activity among the men and women living in the same coeducational unit.

Eskow's study at the University of Maryland reports that coed hall residents: (1) participated more in hall activities, (2) dated more on an informal basis, (3) were more satisfied with their hall and the University, and (4) maintained their grade point averages, whiles studying more with the opposite sex.

> "An Evaluation of the Hagerstown Experience" (University Housing Office, 1970) reported: "In comparison to non-coed halls, residents felt that Hagerstown encouraged good study habits, cultural programming, creativity, and intellectual discussions and achievement significantly more than their non-coed counterparts. Hagerstown residents also felt significantly more pride in their hall, activity in student government, and respect for fellow students than residents of non-coeducational halls."

Purpose of This Study

Several goals and objectives of coeducational housing at the University have been described, based on previous knowledge of college student behavior and residence hall life:

A. A more enthusiastic and comprehensive educational program

B. More growth in terms of man/woman relationships, i.e., less stereotyping, less tension accompanying the acquaintance process, and more frequent interaction

C. Increased satisfaction with the residence hall

Through previous local and other research, a wide variety of attitudinal dimensions related to the goals and objectives of coeducational housing have been tapped. Our goal here has been that of obtaining behavioral kinds of data, i.e., "what students do" in coed and non-coed residence units: "socially," "academically," and, broadly-defined, "educationally."

The limitations of this evaluation are many; The return rate on the Survey forms was less than desired, and the Survey itself did not measure all that it could have. It is, however, proper to pursue the evaluation of coeducational housing, be it at small steps at a time, if we are to make its expansion and improvement continuous and productive. By knowing increasingly more about the attitudes and behaviors of students as a function of their living environment, we help ourselves help our students.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were examined in the study:

1. That coeducational residence units will have more activities, programs, and events than non-coeducational units

2. That coeducational units will have more varied activities, programs, and events than non-coeducational units

3. That students in coeducational units (in comparison to students in non-coeducational units) will report:

   a. more contact with faculty
   b. more interaction with the opposite sex
   c. more academically-oriented behaviors
   d. more time spent in the residence units
   e. more of their "dates" living nearby, on campus
   f. different discussion topics

4. That coeducational residents will express more satisfaction with their residence unit as expressed by a desire to remain in their hall.

PROCEDURE:

Data Collection

Staff members in fourteen randomly-selected residence halls (including all three coed units) were asked to meet with an interviewer from the survey committee; the interviewer met with these staff members to obtain from them a list of the events, activities, and programs which had occurred during the Fall Semester, 1970-71. Unit (i.e., "floor") presidents (n = 25) in those fourteen residence halls were randomly selected and received a form and cover letter asking them to list the events, activities, and programs which had occurred during the Fall Semester.

The Residence Halls Survey questionnaire (locally-devised; Appendix A) was distributed by staff members to 800 students in randomly selected units in ten residence halls across the campus; the questionnaires were then returned to staff members, who returned them to the survey committee. Coed units received 300 questionnaires; non-coed units received 500 questionnaires.

Data Analysis

The activities, events, and programs lists were compiled, replications eliminated, and a separate listing made for coed halls, all-male halls, and all-female halls.

Chi-square analysis, and Student's "t" were used, as appropriate, to test differences for statistical significance in the responses to the Residence Halls Survey. Comparisons were made of males versus females, and coed halls versus non-coed halls.

RESULTS:

Of the 800 questionnaires distributed to residents, 272 (34%) were returned. The "return-rate" from coed and non-coed halls was approximately equal. Total males in the sample were 162, total females were 110. About 60% of the "activity lists" mailed to unit presidents were returned.

1. Coed halls and units appeared to have been the origin of more, although not necessarily more widely-varied activities; however, quantitative and qualitative comparisons are difficult to perform (See Appendix B).

2. Coed hall residents did not differ from non-coed hall residents in the average number of hours studied per week (Question 1). However, some differences did occur between and among the sexes (See Appendix C, Table 1), across the coed and non-coed settings:

   a. Non-coed hall females studied more hours per week than did coed hall females ($x^2 < .05$)

   b. Coed hall males studied 15 hours or more per week more than did coed hall females or non-coed hall males ($x^2 < .05$)

3. Coed hall residents and non-coed residents spent the greater part (65%) of their studying time in their own rooms (Questions 2 and 12), and did their most effective studying there. For all residents, the library was the second most effective study location, although coed hall residents more frequently studied "elsewhere in the hall" than did non-coed hall residents.

4. Coed hall residents, like non-coed hall residents, when asked how they spent their study time (Question 3), ranked, by themselves, first; with their roommate, second; with friends, third; and with a date, last.

5. Coed halls had faculty members visit them much more frequently than did non-coed halls (Question 4); 34% of the coed hall residents indicated that no faculty members visited their hall, while 87% of the non-coed hall residents indicated that no faculty members visited their hall (Table 2). Coed hall residents, like non-coed hall residents, however, did not become well acquainted with many faculty members (most frequently, only one or two).

6. Coed hall residents, like non-coed hall residents, did not read many "non-assigned books" during the semester (Question 5); 62% of the coed hall students read less than two such books, while 70% of the non-coed hall students read less than two.

7. Coed hall residents watched slightly fewer hours of television per week than did non-coed hall residents (Question 9, $x^2 < .10$); 82% of the coed hall residents, compared to 69% of the non-coed hall residents watched fewer than four hours of television per week. In either setting, it appears little television viewing occurs.

8. Coed residents spent fewer non-vacation weekends at home than did non-coed hall residents (Question 8, $x^2 < .10$); 24% of the coed hall residents, as compared to 36% of the non-coed hall residents spent more than five "non-vacation weekends" at home.

9. Coed hall residents did not differ from non-coed hall residents in the percentage of their waking hours spent in their residence hall (50.6% and 51.8%, respectively; Question 14). Males generally spent more time in their respective halls than females did, although no significant differences occurred.

10. "Dates" of coed hall males more frequently lived on campus, than did dates of non-coed hall males; ($x^2 < .05$); dates for females in both coed and non-coed units most frequently lived off-campus (Question 11; see Appendix C, Table 3). For coed hall residents, 19% of their dates lived in the same residence hall.

11. Coed hall residents, much more frequently than non-coed hall residents, ate in the dining hall at tables composed of "about half males, half females", Question 13) -- 83% of the coed hall residents, versus 37% of the non-coed hall residents did so.

12. Coed hall residents, when asked, "With whom would you discuss a highly personal problem," ranked "close friend of opposite sex" first, and "close friend of same sex" second; non-coed hall residents reversed those rankings (Question 10). "Parents" ranked third for both groups. Coed residents ranked a hall staff member, fourth while non-coed residents ranked a University counselor fourth.

Residents' Responses to Question#10, "With whom would you discuss a highly personal problem?" (in ranked order)

Coed Hall Residents	Non-Coed Hall Residents
1. Close friend of opposite sex	1. Close friend of same sex
2. Close friend of same sex	2. Close friend of opposite sex
3. Parents	3. Parents
4. Hall staff member	4. University counselor
5. University counselor	5. Hall staff member
6. A chaplain	6. A chaplain

13. Coed hall residents' perceptions of discussion topics among groups of the opposite sex were, like non-coed hall residents' perceptions,

fairly accurate (Questions 14, 15, and 16)

14. When asked, "Where would you have liked to have lived this year?", coed hall residents much more frequently indicated their current hall (74%) than did non-coed hall residents (52%). Only 5% of the coed residents, as compared to 15% of the non-coed residents, indicated some other hall was where they would like to have lived this year.

A survey of residence hall students taken earlier in the Fall Semester, 1970, also indicated coed hall residents were more satisfied with their hall. When asked what they would do if a one-semester contract were available, 88% of the coed hall residents sampled, as compared with 80% of the non-coed hall residents indicated they would remain in their hall.

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND COMMENT:

It does not appear that residents in coed halls differ from residents in non-coed halls on several "academic" behavioral dimensions (such as time spent studying, books read, acquaintance with faculty members, how studying time was spent), although obtained grade point averages have neither been computed nor compared.

On several other behavioral dimensions that can be examined, coed hall residents do differ from non-coed hall residents. Coed halls do seem to have more activities, events, and programs and residents have more contact with faculty members. Coed residents go home less on weekends, date more on-campus people, watch less television, and interact more frequently with the opposite sex. Coed residents had only slightly fewer misconceptions than non-coed residents of what the opposite sex discusses in "bull sessions". Coed unit residents discussed personal problems more frequently with friends of the opposite sex, and also more frequently with their hall staff members, than did residents of non-coed units.

Generally, it seems that coed hall residents have greater affinity for, and more interaction within, their living unit. Extensive and pervasive differences in self-reported behaviors, however, were not found. We are left to conclude that more "spirit" among members of the unit, manifesting itself in programs and activities, and a greater enjoyment of the residence hall itself may be the most meaningful difference observed to date between coeducational and non-coeducational units at the University of Maryland.

Study coordinated by Robert C. Lynch, Assistant Director of Housing.

RCL:vb

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Centra, John A. Student perceptions of residence hall environments: Living Learning versus Conventional Units. Paper presented at APGA Convention, 1967, Dallas, Texas.

Eskow, Roy L. A Study of the Effects of a Coeducational Residence Hall Environment on the Attitudes and Behaviors of Resident Students. Unpublished Masters Thesis. University of Maryland, College Park, 1970.

Feldman, K. & Newcomb, T. The Impact of College on Students. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc., 1969.

University Housing Office. An Evaluation of the Hagerstown Experience. University of Maryland, College Park, 1970.

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND
Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
College Park, Maryland

University Housing Office January, 1971

Dear Residence Halls Students:

We are attempting to evaluate and improve our residence hall programs, and are asking for your cooperation in our survey. These questionnaires are being distributed to randomly selected floors and units across campus.

Your assistance is vital to our study. Essentially, we are trying to determine what residence hall members do, i.e., describe their behavior. All your responses are confidential and will be used for purposes of this survey only. A report of our findings will be made available during March.

Please respond to each question directly on the questionnaire, then return this to your staff member or your Resident Director by tomorrow evening.

Would you also provide the following information? It is necessary so that we can ensure a representative sample.

Thank you very much.

Residence Hall:_____

Class Year: Fresh. Soph. Jr. Sr.

Sex: Male Female

Residence Last Year:

_____Residence Hall_____

_____Off-Campus_____
(apt., room, etc.?)

_____At Home

_____Other _____

ATTACHMENT A

RESIDENCE HALLS SURVEY

1. What is the average number of hours per week you spent studying this semester?

___less than 5 hours ___5-9 hours ___10-14 hours ___15 hours or more

2. Rank where you spent your study time. (1 = "most"; 6 = "least")

___ in your room
___ elsewhere in the hall
___ in the library
___ in the dining hall
___ other _____ (specify)
___ other _____ (specify)

3. Please rank how you spent your study time. (1 = "most"; 4 = "least")

___ by yourself
___ with a date
___ with friends
___ with your roommate

4. How many faculty members visited your hall this semester?

___ none ___ 1 or 2 ___ 3 or 4 ___ 5 or 6 ___ 7 or more

5. How many non-assigned books did you read this semester?

___ none ___ 1 or 2 ___ 3 or 4 ___ 5 or 6 ___ 7 or more

6. What grade point average do you expect to obtain this semester? _____

7. How many faculty members did you become well acquainted with this semester?

___ none ___ 1 or 2 ___ 3 or 4 ___ 5 or 6 ___ 7 or more

8. How many non-vacation weekends did you spend at home this semester?

___ none ___ 1 ___ 2 ___ 3 or 4 ___ 5 or 6 ___ 7 or more

9. How many hours per week did you watch television?

___ none ___ 1 to 4 ___ 5 to 9 ___ 10 to 14 ___ 15 or more

10. With whom would you discuss a highly personal problem? (Rank them from 1 = "first" to 8 = "last")

___ close friend of same sex
___ close friend of opposite sex
___ a chaplain
___ parents
___ University counselor
___ hall staff member
___ faculty member
___ other _____ (please specify)

11. Where do most of your dates live?

____ in your residence area
____ in another residence hall area
____ in your hall (for coed units)
____ Greek house
____ off-campus

12. Where do you study most effectively? _____

_____

13. When you are eating in the dining hall, do you eat at tables of:

____ mostly males ____ mostly females ____ about half male, half females

14. What percent of your waking hours do you spend in your residence hall per week? _____%

15. How frequently do the following topics occur in bull sessions among males? (Rank from 1 = "most frequently, to 8 = "least frequently")

____ movies, books
____ campus events
____ sex/opposite sex /dating
____ coursework, assignments
____ national, international events
____ sports
____ drugs
____ other _____ (please specify)

16. How frequently do the following topics occur in bull sessions among females? (Rank from 1 = "most frequently", to 8 = "least frequently")

____ movies, books
____ campus events
____ sex/opposite sex/dating
____ coursework, assignments
____ national, international events
____ sports
____ drugs
____ other _____ (please specify)

17. How frequently do the following topics occur in bull sessions among mixed groups,(males and females)? (Rank from 1="most frequently" to 8="least frequently")

____ movies, books
____ campus events
____ sex/opposite sex/dating
____ coursework, assignments
____ national, international events
____ sports
____ drugs
____ other _____ (please specify)

18. Where would you like to have lived this year?_____

19. What reasons would explain why you are not living there?_____

_____

RCL:vb

Appendix B

SUMMARY OF UNIT OR HALL PROGRAMS/EVENTS/ACTIVITIES

Coed Units

Four classes/seminars in the hall
Tree trimming party
Wine & cheese party w/ other dorm*
Roller skating w/another dorm*
Ice skating w/ another dorm*
Muscular Dystrophy participation
Speakers*
Door-decorating Contest - Christmas
Barbecues*
Big-Little brother party
Halloween party*
Christmas party*
Finger painting party
Films (old-time, environment/ecology)*
Trip to Skyline Drive
Floor dinners
Sports day
Jogging nightly
Trip to Great Falls, Md.
"Halfway House"
Pumpkin carving contests
Crab Feast
Girls football teams
Parents Weekend
Trip to Fords Theater
Drug, Sex seminars
Dorm parties*
Bonfire

All-Male Units

Dorm Parties*
Guest speakers
Tournaments-pingpong, football
Mixers*
Homecoming party, float, pep rally
Films
Charity fund-raising drives
Muscular Dystrophy participation
Crab Feast
Orphans party
Camping weekend
Christmas party*
Sex seminar
Dorm dinners
Bonfire

All-Female Units

Mixers*
Fund raising projects*
Muscular Dystrophy participation
Big-Little sister program
Made favors for 2 hospitals
Pumpkin pie sale
Adopted foster child
Room decorating contest
Christmas parties*
Warm clothing drive
Halloween parties
Orphans parties*
Coffeehouses
Dorm dinner
Girls football game
Food basket

* Cited several times in activity listings

Appendix C

TABLES OF RESULTS

Table 1

Average number of hours spent studying per week by hall residents (in percentages).

	Non-coed Males (n=103)	Coed Hall Males (n=59)	Coed Hall Females (n=63)	Non-coed Females (n=47)
Less than 5 hours	18%	10%	19%	7%
5-9 hours	28%	32%	22%	16%
10-14 hours	31%	15%	40%	38%
More than 10 hours	23%	43%	19%	39%
	100%	100%	100%	100%

Table 2

Residents' Responses to Question #4: "How many faculty members visited your hall this semester?" (in percentages)

	None	1 or 2	3 or 4	5 or 6	7 or More
Coed Hall Residents	34%	31%	16%	6%	13%
Non-Coed Hall Residents	87%	11%	1%	1%	0%

Table 3

Residents' Responses to Question #11: "Where do most of your dates live?" (in percentages)

	Non-Coed Males	Coed Hall Males	Coed Hall Females	Non-Coed Females
On-Campus	44%	67%	46%	40%
Off-Campus (including Greek houses)	56%	33%	54%	60%